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The context of Algeria and the start of the Algerian Revolution in 1954 constituted a pivot point for Fanon. As recounted by Zeilig – and it should be stressed that Zeilig does an excellent job of placing Fanon’s life within this vibrant historical context – the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) sought to break from the bourgeois nationalism that had dominated Algerian politics in the preceding decades to establish instead ‘a broad, cross-class alliance’ (p. 61) that was more grassroots in orientation. It is through this social understanding of the FLN that Zeilig situates Fanon and the wider political world he embraced. Indeed, as indicated earlier, this biography is strongest in its outlining of the political ferment that led to the writing of *The Wretched of the Earth*, with Zeilig offering a detailed chronology and a grounded mapping of Fanon’s movements from Blida-Joinville to Tunis, to Accra, and elsewhere during this chaotic, though productive, period.

Zeilig provides a careful reading of Fanon’s final work. He is not uncritical of Fanon’s conceptual generalizations, at one point describing how they might ‘throw sand in the eyes of the reader’ (p. 187). More specifically, he discusses how Fanon idealized the peasantry as a vanguard for revolution. This political vision was not only strategically misplaced, but, in contrast to many Fanonists, Zeilig underscores how this argument has proven detrimental for recognizing and supporting urban working-class politics in the subsequent decades. ‘The real history of working-class action in the Third World has often been concealed,’ Zeilig writes in his book’s conclusion. ‘Fanon’s role in helping to conceal this reality makes his legacy decidedly ambiguous for those of us who seek to develop (and recover) such a politics today’ (p. 243). *Frantz Fanon* is ultimately to be commended for its balance of political commitment and nuanced criticism, which serves to both demythologize and enhance our appreciation of this indispensable, protean thinker.

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Elleni Centime Zeleke, *Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964–2016*. Leiden and Chicago IL: Brill and Haymarket Books (hb €139 – 978 90 04 41475 4; pb US\$30 – 978 1 64259 341 9). 2019/2020, 281 pp.

Ethiopia in Theory is a thought-provoking original work that pushes disciplinary boundaries. It is bold in its theoretical and epistemological grounding, and emancipatory in its practical implications. The book shines the spotlight on knowledge production and social science practice in Africa. This is done by narrating the story of the Ethiopian student movement of the 1960s and 1970s and how this movement appropriated Marxist and social science ideas. The book launches into an investigation that redefines our understanding of critical theory in an African context. The main concerns of this inquiry have implications for how we view and approach knowledge production within African Studies. One of the original contributions of the book is that not only is it

interested in ideas, in and of themselves, but also it shows how these can imbue social practices and their consequences. The main questions driving this investigation are answered in Part One of the book, where the case study of the Ethiopian student movement is presented as an instance of the indigenization of social science ideas in Africa. Part Two, on the other hand, offers insights into what this African case study might tell us about the practice of critical social science outside its European origins.

The book is divided into an Introduction followed by the two main parts. The Introduction outlines the context and delineates the scope of the book. Part One is the case study, which tells the story of revolution and the evolution of Marxist and social science ideas in the Ethiopian student movement. This part consists of five chapters that contextualize the two main concerns of the book: the ways in which Marxist and social science ideas are localized in an African context; and the problem of the social sciences in Africa. These chapters narrate how young Ethiopian intellectuals turned to social science ideas in an attempt to confront their complex social conditions. The chapters present the legacy of the student movement as an instance of how ideas are linked to social change. This analysis is underpinned by a robust examination of archival and oral sources.

Zelege proposes *Tizita* as an alternative method 'to get at the historical dynamics at play between knowledge production and social practice in Ethiopia'. Anyone with some knowledge of Ethiopia might recognize *Tizita* as a form of song or music. However, for Zelege, *Tizita* is invoked as a methodological form that allows her to account for, and make sense of, a structure of feeling, inheritances and memories of revolution. *Tizita* is Zelege's alternative to the positivism and empiricism that have dogged the social sciences in Ethiopia. Through this novel method, she is able to theorize the meaning of the 1974 revolution and its aftermath.

Chapter 3 is perhaps the most captivating, where we see evidence of the nexus between social science ideas and political practice. Here, we are taken on a journey that narrates the debates that dominated the Ethiopian student movement. This chapter presents the intellectual biographies of key figures in the student movement, who would later become the architects of state policy in Ethiopia. The social science ideas that were hotly contested in the student movement emerge as policy debates in the aftermath of the revolution. This leads to what Zelege calls a 'passive revolution'. For Zelege, the period after the contested 2005 election marks a kind of cul-de-sac in social science ideas in Ethiopia. Part Two of the book is a heavy theoretical meditation on the 'Problem of the social sciences in Africa'. This is where Zelege confronts the positivist paradigm that dominates the social sciences in Africa, including Ethiopia. In this part of the book, she wrestles with historical, theoretical and philosophical questions that are central to the problems of social science practice in Africa.

Ethiopia in Theory is a major contribution to the literature that theorizes political thought and social practice in Africa and beyond. Zelege presents Ethiopian political history in an outstanding cross-disciplinary analysis that links the specific case of Ethiopian revolutionary political thought and practice to the history of global social relations. This provides for a more nuanced approach to addressing longstanding debates such as those relating to nationality, land and democracy in Ethiopia. Yet, for a book that claims to present the questions raised in the Ethiopian student movement as African questions, the book does rather little to make this connection. It is not clear, for example, how knowledge production in Ethiopia in the 1960s and

1970s might have resonated with similar processes elsewhere on the continent in the same period. One thinks of the robust debates that were taking place at CODESRIA, for instance, and how these might have intersected with those in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, what Zeleke does with the history of the Ethiopian student movement challenges us to reconsider how we think about knowledge production and critical theory within African Studies. Most importantly, the book opens up new pathways for thinking about some of the most urgent social questions facing Ethiopia today.

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Laleh Khalili, *Sinews of War and Trade: Shipping and Capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula*. London: Verso (pb £11.99 – 978 1 7866 3482 5). 2021, v + 384 pp.

In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Charles Tilly famously argues that ‘states make war and wars make states’. He traces the emergence of the modern state in Europe to mechanisms of protection and extraction that transformed warlords into state makers as competitive societies sought new resources. However, as the disruption of global trade and shipping lines caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has shown, trade is no longer state-limited. This new era of globalism has intensified economic competition for resources and products and highlighted the global interdependency and vulnerabilities between states. Therefore, it could be argued that international competition around economic nodes makes war, and war makes economic nodes. Laleh Khalili’s book *Sinews of War and Trade* shows how conflict created trade nodes and routes, which in turn produced wars.

Sinews of War and Trade is a unique intervention emphasizing the intersection of trade and security in the Middle East. Khalili tells the story of the making and unmaking of trade infrastructures that also define conflict and peace in the Arabian Peninsula. The central thesis of her book is that ‘maritime transportation is not simply an enabling adjunct of trade but is central to the very fabric of global capitalism’ (p. 3).

Khalili underscores the critical role of ships and ports in our modern global system. The book tells thoughtful stories about ‘how ports and maritime transport infrastructures have emerged out of the conjuncture of so many histories, struggles, conflicts, and plans (half-formed, implemented, and failed)’ around the ‘sinews of capitalism and conflict’. In her account of modern ports, Khalili grasps the nuances between modern automated ports and conventional populated ports (port cities), the latter growing due to local social factors rather than state-planned projects. She also shows the connections between ports and their hinterlands by highlighting the role of pilgrimage, trade and resource exploitation in road planning. Interestingly, she emphasizes the confluence of interests and motivations at the heart of infrastructural and development projects, eschewing a state-centric approach.